

USES OF THE MARRIED NURSE

DEAR EDITOR: I am well aware that a nurse is more or less relegated to oblivion in the professional world when she takes up the duties of a home, nor does she have very many spare moments for outside problems and recreations if she takes the proper care of her own family; but there is oftentimes a little rebellious heartache, at being "sort of dropped" by those who made up her former life, and she doesn't in the least enjoy being snubbed by a few more or less fortunate sisters, as the case may be. However I want to tell some of our JOURNAL readers how one married nurse keeps in touch with her profession, and at the same time gets all the sunshine there is in a little home.

Soon after I "wantonly disgraced my profession" we were stationed in a little southern town where "married ladies are supported by their husbands," so after leaving a nice long case of almost a year, I settled down to *board* and *do nothing*, except dress for meals three times a day, and rest and gossip between times, neither of which appeals to a nurse. I accidentally met the head surgeon of the one hospital in town one day, and was invited by him to attend a very complicated operation. This proved an "open sesame" to the operating room, as the Sisters in charge kindly pressed me into service and gave me many a pleasant hour behind the scenes. Then, too, a little hourly work came to me, and aided materially in keeping me from feeling as though I had become an extravagance of nature. For if I could "surreptitiously" hide my beloved uniform under a long coat, and run out for an hour to bake a refractory knee, or bathe and freshen up some doctor's patient, why shouldn't I?

After a few months we were transferred to the busy west where "women vote and do as they please," and here I have been confronted with many new problems. I may say, too, that we at once began housekeeping and I have had need over and over for every morsel of theory and practice in scientific cookery, as we both had gotten indigestion while boarding. At my husband's place of business are seventy-five employees, and I have been called to give "first aid to the injured" many, many times—in fact I have bandaged more sprains, and looked after more cuts and bruises the past few months than I did during my entire career as a nurse. Best of all is the wonderful opportunity of mothering the working girls, for one can usually get in a little suggestion on cleanliness and right habits of living while looking after the minor ills that come up.

Then, too, our own little boy had such a fight with his digestion that the first year of his life gave me a constant patient—sterilizing, pasteurizing, predigesting food, daily oil rubs, etc., while my next door neighbor, with absolutely no idea of motherhood except to clothe and feed the baby, was giving her boy the proverbial carpet tacks at six months. At eight months hers was a twenty-five pounder while ours weighed only twelve, but I say with pardonable gratification that now at one and one-half years our boy tips the scales at thirty pounds, while the precocious neighbor is under treatment for general intestinal derangement, with the usual emaciation attending such disorders. Just here let me relate a funny experience from the same household. I was called in great haste one morning—"Baby is limber all over and going to have a spasm." At a glance I saw the child had had an overdose of something, but the mother insisted she had given him nothing. I began immediately to investigate the

gas fixtures for a leak, when she suddenly remembered that she had been giving him honey and tar syrup all night, but "John" (the six-foot father) "takes it and it doesn't hurt him!" On examining the bottle I found that the cough syrup contained 12 per cent. alcohol, and the poor little chap was "gloriously drunk."

Last summer I spent a delightful day at the large hospital here assisting with some anæsthetic patients. It did seem good to be back in harness again even for so short a time. Then I have different nurses in the field run in to luncheon with me when I am alone, and we can talk shop unreservedly. We always take so much pleasure in discussing the JOURNAL—I would as soon expect to get along without my cook stove as do without our beloved JOURNAL. I think the hospitals make a mistake in not educating their nurses to appreciate the constant help this magazine gives them. I happened to be called, through a serious illness, to spend several tedious weeks in a large up-to-date hospital in our town, but not one pupil nurse had ever seen a copy of the JOURNAL. When I approached the superintendent on the subject she said: "Oh, the girls get so much theory and practice here that when they have time for other reading they want fiction." Let it be known, however, that my JOURNALS went the rounds and we discussed many an article, over the daily bath. Of course, as the philosophical Mrs. Wiggs remarked: "Them as ain't et turkey don't know what they've missed," but it does seem too bad for a nurse in actual service not to have the JOURNAL.

I shall continue to cherish the love for the work and supplement it along with my home duties, trying materially to enlighten some less experienced mothers and be a little comfort to humanity in general, not, I fear, from any innate goodness, but just because I love the life of a nurse."

M. T. J.

The German idea of the "Woman's Year of Service" seems to have much to commend it, judging from the verdict of a German lady, who has herself "served" in this way, and writes about it in the *Zeitschrift für Krankenpflege*. As men give a year, or more, of their lives in military service, so girls devote a year to nursing the sick of the nation, enjoying the advantages of a year's useful training in mind and body. The lady in question says that her own relations thought her mad, or "ready for a convent," when she announced her intention of serving in this way, but she carried out her wish, and recommends all girls to do the same. One learns self-reliance, she says, experience of men and things, one's outlook on life is enlarged, and the body becomes stronger and more active. Just as the young man shows in his bearing if he has been through military training, so the girl who has passed her hospital training shows it in her more purposeful, brighter, and more womanly personality.